JADE UNIVERSITY
OF APPLIED SCIENCES
Wilhelmshaven Oldenburg **Elsfleth**

Department of Maritime and Logistics Studies

Guidelines for the Recognition of Competences Acquired at or Outside Universities on the Continuing Education Programme International Maritime Management (M.Sc.)

1. Aim of the Guidelines

The aim of these guidelines is to present all the possibilities for the recognition of competences[1], acquired at or outside universities, on the continuing education programme International Maritime Management. In addition, this document is intended to serve as an overview for all those involved – potential and enrolled students, lecturers, and the examination board of the Department of Maritime and Logistics Studies – and to assist in the implementation of the recognition processes.

First, the foundations for a common understanding will be defined. This encompasses the definition of the term and the reasons for the recognition of credits. Subsequently, the various possibilities for recognising credits and the related processes will be explained in the context of the continuing education course International Maritime Management.

2. What is Recognition?

Recognition is "the procedure by which competences acquired outside universities may be substituted for one or more or credits or examinations, having previously been recognized as equivalent" (Hanak/ Sturm 2015, p. 19; translation by authors).

3. Why are Competences Recognised?

Prospective students of continuing education courses have taken up work after the successful completion of their bachelor's studies. In the case of International Maritime Management, they usually work in junior management positions in the maritime industry – at sea or ashore. As a result, they already have professional experience (practical knowledge, skills and competences) and individual key qualifications.

---

[1] Competence is "the ability and willingness of the individual to use knowledge and skills, as well as personal, social and methodological abilities, and to act in both a considered and an individually and socially responsible manner. In this sense, competence is understood as comprehensive competence to act." (AK DQR 2011; translation by authors). This requires professional expertise (knowledge and skills) and personal competence (social competence and independent thinking). This structure comes from the German Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (ibid.)

For this reason, on the course of studies International Maritime Management, structures will be implemented for the recognition of existing expertise. The already acquired competences can be documented by means of structured procedures and can be applied to the course modules. The reasons for the establishment of procedures for recognition at universities can be summarised in the following arguments:

- Increasing the permeability between vocational and higher education and promoting lifelong learning are key elements of the Bologna process (BMBF 2015).

- Existing skills and past learning are recognised and do not need to be re-studied. As a result, the duration and costs of studies can be reduced (German Council of Science and Humanities 2014, p. 91).

- Prospective students can go through the recognition procedure before starting their studies. A possible shortening of the study programme can, for those with a limited time budget due to professional and/or family responsibilities, facilitate the decision to study part-time and make it easier to plan this accordingly.

4. What Can Be Recognised?

In the recognition process, a distinction is made between competences acquired outside the field of higher education and credits and examinations at university.

4.1 Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education Institutions

In principle, achievements at another university (abroad) – credits taken and examinations passed – can be recognised.

Credit transfer within the European Higher Education Area is governed by the "Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region" (Lisbon Recognition Convention) of 11 April 1997. This presupposes that the university or the course of study is duly recognised or accredited. In addition, corresponding performance records must be documented (The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany n.y.). The applicant submits an application to the examination board to have individual modules recognised on the basis of an already acquired qualification. In doing so, they must make available to the university all documents relevant for the recognition of credits (duty to inform). The examination board shall examine the application and decide whether to accept the qualification. If it decides against doing so, it must state that the qualification cannot be recognised due to significant differences from the modules or course of study of International Maritime Management (sections III and VIII Lisbon Recognition Convention).

When deciding on the recognition of qualifications gained at university level outside the European Higher Education Area, an individual assessment of the equivalence of the content and level of the qualifications must be made.

Grades from previous studies are accepted and transferred.

4.2 Competences Acquired Outside Higher Education Institutions

A distinction is made between 'general' and 'individual' procedures for the recognition of achieve-

ments in fields outside higher education institutions. **General recognition** "applies to courses of study or periods of work experience, certain parts of which can be recognised as equivalent to periods of study. These are generally recognised independent of the respective applicant. As a rule, a 'homogeneous' target group is thereby addressed, one which has prior knowledge of relevant subject-matter." (Hanft et al. 2014, p. 3; translation by authors). **Individual credit recognition** "refers to the specific competences of the particular applicant which must be examined individually." (ibid.; translation by authors). The merging of general and individual credit is called combined credit.

General Recognition

On submission of the Certificate of Competency as a first nautical officer according to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) 1978, as amended, each holder of the qualification receives, without an individual review, a credit for the module 'Human Factors in Shipping' amounting to six credit points (see application). The credit is transferred without a grade. In addition, individual recognition of competences acquired outside the sphere of higher education is possible.

Individual Recognition

The individual crediting of previous experience acquired outside the university system is fundamentally based on individual case decisions (Loroff et al. 2011, p. 114). Nevertheless, the process has to meet various requirements. The crediting procedure must be commensurable and transparent and must also be implemented with quality assurance. To achieve this, procedures based on structured portfolios[2] work well. Such procedures are accepted in university practice. It must be said, however, that they cost the parties involved a lot of time. The main requirement is that the applicant should develop a well-structured and comprehensible portfolio which can be understood by the examiners without extensive prior knowledge in the field (Hanft et al. 2014, p. III). Competences and prior learning can be acquired in a so-called formal, non-formal and informal manner (ANKOM 2010). For the individual recognition of credits, learning results acquired in an informal context (working life, social environment, etc.) are particularly significant.

On the International Maritime Management course a process has been developed for the recognition of individual competences acquired outside the university system. The structure is as follows:

1. Inform: On the basis of the information provided, interested persons are given an overview.

2. Document: On the basis of this information, the candidate compiles his/her portfolio and makes an application for recognition (see application document below).

3. Recognition: The examination board reaches a decision concerning the application. The decision is mainly based on the individual portfolio:

    (a) The recognition will be implemented and the study time immediately shortened.

---

[2] The term 'portfolio' (Italian: portafoglio) is composed of the two words portare (to carry, to bear) and foglio (leaf, sheet of paper) (Hornung-Prähauser et al. 2007, p. 127). Portfolios can serve various purposes and therefore be variously defined. In the text above the definition by Paulson et al. (1991, p. 60) will apply. "A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection." (ibid.).

(b) If a decision on the basis of material submitted is not possible or if there is any doubt about the significance of the portfolio, the opportunity to discuss the evaluation will be offered. In it, the information required for the decision can be determined.

(c) Recognition will not be granted.

4. Where appropriate: A decision regarding recognition will be reached at the end of the discussion.

For further queries regarding credit transfer, the course coordinators for International Maritime Management may be contacted. Recognition of credits can be carried out before beginning the course, making planning easier.

Recognition is not limited to one of the three options. The options are dealt with independently of one another. Recognition depends solely on the competences already acquired by the applicant. According to the German Qualifications Framework "what someone can do, and not where it was learned" (AK DQR 2011, p. 5; translation by authors) is the crucial factor for the recognition of competences.

5. List of Sources and Literature

Anrechnung beruflicher Kompetenzen auf Hochschulstudiengänge (ANKOM) (2010): *Anrechnungsleitlinie für die Qualitätssicherung von Verfahren zur Anrechnung beruflicher und außerhochschulisch erworbener Kompetenzen auf Hochschulstudiengänge.* Hannover und Berlin.

Arbeitskreis Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen (AK DQR) (2011): Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen für lebenslanges Lernen. Verabschiedet vom AK DQR am 22.03.2011. URL: http://www.dqr.de/media/content/Der_Deutsche_Qualifikationsrahmen_fue_lebenslanges_Lernen.pdf (Accessed: 29/01/2016).

Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) (2015): Der Bologna-Prozess – die Europäische Studienreform. URL: https://www.bmbf.de/de/der-bologna-prozess-die-europaeische-studienreform-1038.html (Accessed: 21/01/2016).

German Council of Science and Humanities (2014): Empfehlungen zur Gestaltung des Verhältnisses von beruflicher und akademischer Bildung. Erster Teil der Empfehlungen zur Qualifizierung von Fachkräften vor dem Hintergrund des demographischen Wandels. URL: http://www.wissenschaftsrat.de/download/archiv/3818-14.pdf (Accessed: 15/02/2016).

Hanak, H. & Sturm, N. (2015): *Anerkennung und Anrechnung außerhochschulisch erworbener Kompetenzen. Eine Handreichung für die wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung.* Wiesbaden.

Hanft, A., Brinkmann, K., Gierke, W. B. & Müskens, W. (2014): *Anrechnung außerhochschulischer Kompetenzen in Studiengängen. Studie: AnHoSt „Anrechnungspraxis in Hochschulstudiengängen".* Oldenburg.

Hornung-Prähauser, V., Schaffert, S., Hilzensauer, W. & Wieden-Bischof, D. (2007): ePortfolio-Einführung an Hochschulen. Erwartungen und Einsatzmöglichkeiten im Laufe einer akademischen Bildungsbiografie. In: M. Merkt, K. Mayrberger, R. Schulmeister, A. Sommer & I. van den Berk (eds): *Studieren neu erfinden – Hochschule neu denken* (pp. 126-135). Münster.

Loroff, C., Stamm-Riemer, I. & Hartmann, E. A. (2011): Anrechnung: Modellentwicklung, Generalisierung und Kontextbedingungen. In: W. K. Freitag, E. A. Hartmann, C. Loroff, I. Stamm-Riemer, D. Völk &

R. Buhr (eds): *Gestaltungsfeld Anrechnung Hochschulische und berufliche Bildung im Wandel* (pp. 77-117). Münster.

Paulson, F. L., Paulson, P. R. & Meyer, C. A. (1991): What Makes a Portfolio a Portfolio? Eight thought-ful guidelines will help educators encourage self-directed learning. *Educational Leadership, 48*(5), pp. 60-63.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (n.y.): Anrechnung von Studien- und Prüfungsleistungen. URL: http://www.k-mk.org/zab/anerkennung-im-hochschulbereich/anrechnung-von-studien-und-pruefungsleistun-gen.html (Accessed: 21/01/2016).